

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

Re: Application of: **Reinhold MEIER et al.**
Serial No.: 10/588,538 Confirmation No.: 8360
Filed: August 7, 2006
For: **METHOD FOR CONNECTING COMPONENTS**
Art Unit: 3742
Examiner: Sang Yeop Paik
Customer No.: 23280
Atty. Docket: 5038.1035
Customer No.: 23280

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Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

June 9, 2011

APPELLANTS' REPLY BRIEF UNDER 37 C.F.R. §41.41

Sir:

Appellants submit this Reply Brief for consideration of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences (the "Board") in response to the Examiner's Answer dated April 13, 2011 and in support of their appeal of the Final Rejection dated September 15, 2010. Appellants respectfully reassert each of the arguments asserted in Appellants' Brief dated January 11, 2011, and provide herein only a rebuttal of several of the arguments and in the Examiner's Answer. Appellants also address herein the New Grounds raised in the Examiner's Answer. No fee is believed required. If any fee is required at this time, the Assistant Commissioner is authorized to charge payment of the same to Deposit Account No. 50-0552.

ARGUMENTS

The following additional remarks are submitted for consideration by the Board under 37 CFR §41.41.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 6 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. 2004/0169022 (“Mega et al.”) in view of U.S. 2,662,277 (“Stone”) or U.S. 2,288,433 (“Boetcher et al”) and US 5,245,155 (“Pratt et al.”) or US 2004/0191064 (“Guo”).

In the paragraph [0032] of Mega cited by the Examiner, there is simply no clear disclosure that tip plug 56 is welded temporarily *to the tip section 52* as asserted by the Examiner’s Answer. If somehow it were the case (and there is not clear teaching that it is), then there also is no reason or motivation to use a laser powder build up weld as the subsequent weld, in view of any of Stone or Pratt or Guo, since the tip plug 56/ tip section 52 connection of Mega would form a very narrow gap where it would be difficult to place powder and form such a weld. The Stone/Pratt/Guo welds are all for connections of a different type than the asserted connection in Mega, and there would be no reason to use a powder weld in the very narrow gap of Mega.

Reversal of the rejections to claims 6 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Claims 9 to 11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mega in view of Stone or Boetcher, and Pratt or Guo as applied to claims 6 and 8 above, and further in view of U.S. 2,492,833 (Baumann) or U.S. 2,200,287 (Lysholm).

With further respect to claims 9 and 10, the Examiner’s Answer does not properly address the required modifications to Mega. It is not enough, under MPEP 2141, to state that Mega “is in the same field of endeavor” and “it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of Mega, as modified by Stone or Boetcher, and Pratt or Guo, to other turbine components.”

Mega simply does not show such flanges and is for a repair method with cutouts, and there is simply no proper reason or motivation given for modifying Mega to provide flanges to the device of Mega. The only reason given is that such “rotor disks are well known in the gas turbines” (see Page 4 of Examiner’s Answer at bottom). But Mega doesn’t deal with such rotor

disks at all, and just because things are well-known does not mean there is a reason or motivation to combine them. There are many, many different kinds of welds in gas turbines and there is simply no factual basis for asserting that Mega's repair method applicable to all of them.

Reversal of the rejections to claims 9 to 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Favorable consideration of this Reply Brief is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
DAVIDSON, DAVIDSON & KAPPEL, LLC

By: 

William C. Gehris, Reg. No. 38,156

DAVIDSON, DAVIDSON & KAPPEL, LLC
485 Seventh Avenue, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10018
Tel: (212) 736-1940
Fax: (212) 736-2427